Dales

YORKSHIRE DALES
National Park Authority

A newspaper for the residents of the Yorkshire Dales National Park

Summer 2025

New Management Plan for the National Park



A new Management Plan, guiding the work of organisations that operate in the National Park for the next five years, has been adopted.

The new Yorkshire Dales National Park Management Plan - the document that will guide the work and plans of the many organisations that operate within the National Park over the next five years - has been adopted.

The Plan, covering the period from 2025-2030, has been produced by a partnership of local organisations, including representatives from farming, landowners and tourism businesses.

In January, the partnership published a set of 40 proposed objectives for local organisations and the public to consider and comment on.

Some of those objectives continue long-standing work to broaden access, provide more affordable housing, and retain the National Park's dark night skies. Others are new - such as creating over 5,000 hectares of new wildlife-rich habitats, and supporting more regenerative farming - reflecting the Plan's twin priorities to restore nature and help to mitigate and adapt to the impacts of climate change.

Over 100 responses were received and the results of that consultation were published on the Authority's website. The Partnership met at the end of April to consider those responses and make final changes to the proposed objectives, before taking the Plan to the Authority meeting on 23 June, where it was formally adopted.

Twenty-four different organisations have lead responsibility for one or more of the objectives. At least 60 other organisations (or groups of organisations) will help support the delivery of objectives. The new Management Plan will also provide the framework for other key strategy documents, including the Local Plan.

National Park Authority Chair Derek Twine said: "The Yorkshire Dales National Park Management Plan is a genuine partnership plan. It sets out an ambitious - but necessary - programme of work to which many local organisations have committed their support.

"Whilst it rightly focuses on tackling the challenges of climate change and the continuing decline in nature, it also identifies other opportunities to foster the social and economic wellbeing of local communities, by setting out objectives for more affordable housing, hyperfast broadband access, and support for viable farming businesses.

Mr Twine, who is also deputy chair of the Yorkshire Dales National Park Management Plan Partnership, added: "We've had National Park Management Plans for some time. My hope is that with each five-year review, the management plan becomes more embedded in the culture of all organisations working in the National Park."

Find out more about the new National Park Management Plan at **www.yorkshiredales.org.uk/national-park-management-plan**

A creative collaboration exploring Dales uplands through art

Artists are shining a light on high nature value farming practices as part of Tees-Swale: Creatively Connected - a three-phase project celebrating the connection between farming, landscape and creativity.

Produced by Northern Heartlands and funded by Arts Council England and the National Lottery Heritage Fund, the year-long programme is part of the wider £8.5 million initiative, Tees-Swale: Naturally Connected, which has been running since 2019.

This partnership between the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority and the North Pennines National Landscape supports farmers, landowners, conservationists, volunteers and local communities to address major challenges such as biodiversity loss, climate change and flood management - all while championing high nature value farming.

Creatively Connected brings together five artists - Azadeh Faterhad, John Coburn, Laura Harrington, Matt Denham, and Tim Shaw - to explore the rich cultural and ecological landscapes of Teesdale and Swaledale.

Working closely with the local community and the Tees-Swale project team, each artist is using different creative mediums to spark conversation around farming, nature recovery and the future of our upland landscapes.

Using personal stories, maps, film and photography, Azadeh is exploring communities and connection, revealing the emotional heart of rural life, and sharing farmers' views on survival, change and adaptation.

John and Tim are working on eight creative activities along key spots by the River Swale, involving hands-on artmaking, kite flying, and soundscapes.

Matt's piece, *Ecological Blueprints,* explores how different elements - like habitats, farming methods, local knowledge and care for the land - come together to shape a unique plan for helping nature thrive in Teesdale.

And Laura challenges the way people think about farming's role in nature in her project, *Wearing the Uplands*. At its heart are two specially knitted 'Bog Jumpers' - one for each dale - which spark conversations, workshops, a film and a publication.

The project spans three phases: research and building understanding, shared discussions about high nature value farming, and, finally, showcasing their work and reflecting on the role that creativity can play in building a more sustainable future for our local environment.



Artist Tim Shaw installs a live audio 'streambox 'at Hazel Brow Farm in Swaledale, sharing the sounds of a working farm and its surrounding wildlife. Credit: John Coburn/Tim Shaw (Wild Museum)

Find out more and follow the Creatively Connected programme as it develops at **www.yorkshiredales.org.uk/tees-swale-naturally-connected**

Welcome to the Summer edition of *Dales*

A very warm welcome to this edition. We are writing at a wonderful time of year when the Dales is seen at its very best.

It feels like a positive start to the year; a year which has seen the publication of the National Park Management Plan - a strategy for the area covering the next five years, which has been put together by all those who have an interest in the future sustainability and well-being of the National Park.

It has been an enormous effort of collaboration and partnership, and we would just like to thank and acknowledge the efforts of so many organisations and individuals. Now it's time for delivery.

The Plan is published at a time of some uncertainty. We have a new government who have yet to set out their approach to the environment, and the role of National Parks in particular.

Financially, things also look a little uncertain and, together with the current difficulties regarding the future of farming, land management and land use, we are in for a challenging few years ahead. However, we do strongly believe it is only by working together that we can face these challenges and deliver the very best for the area and its communities.

Talking of communities, we recently held our three Spring Parish Forums. These are an opportunity for the Parish Councils and Parish Meetings of the National Park to come together to share experience and expertise and listen to some of the initiatives and projects planned for the year ahead. Please encourage your Parish Councillors to attend.

All the very best.



Derek Twine
CHAIR

David Butterworth
CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Trainees champion National Park for all



By Jamila Gaskin, Project Officer, Championing National Parks for Everyone

Everyone should feel supported to visit and receive the health and well-being benefits of spending time in National Parks.

The 'Championing National Parks for Everyone' project aims to give people the confidence to visit and enjoy our National Parks by addressing inequalities in accessing them, including those from ethnically and culturally diverse backgrounds.

Led by Peak District Mosaic, in partnership with the Yorkshire Dales, Peak District and North York Moors National Park Authorities and Derbyshire Dales CVS, the project supports the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority's ambition to be a friendly, open and welcoming place with outstanding opportunities to enjoy its special qualities.

It offers participants the opportunity to experience the benefits of spending time in nature, while gaining skills and knowledge to protect and conserve the Yorkshire Dales National Park.

A central element has been the creation of a traineeship to expand pathways to enter employment in the environmental and outdoor sectors. An Engagement Trainee is now in post until February 2026 to support the delivery of the project, and develop the knowledge and skills to support them in gaining further opportunities.

The 'Community Champion' training programme is at the heart of the project. To date, 28 individuals from ethnically and culturally diverse communities have begun their journey. The programme is equipping participants with practical navigation and group management skills, and deepening their understanding and connection to the National Park. It will ultimately create a cohort of volunteers who can independently deliver safe, enjoyable and sustainable outdoor activities for their family, friends and communities to the Yorkshire Dales into the future.

One Champion commented that it had been "a fantastic experience, thanks to all involved in delivering the sessions to enable me to grow in confidence using National Parks", while another shared that they had "connected with new people, nature, and learned new information".

Through the project, we have also welcomed several community groups from Leeds, Bradford and Keighley to the Yorkshire Dales. For many, it was their first time experiencing the National Park and the feedback has been positive. One attendee was so impressed that they were inspired to sign up for the Community Champion programme.

Activities have included farm visits, creative sessions, the Dales Countryside Museum, and a 15km walk exploring the stunning landscape. All are designed to showcase the best of the Dales, build lasting connections to the landscape, and support people to visit independently.

The project will continue until March 2026 with more visits and training opportunities planned. The 6-day Community Champion training programme runs over the course of a five-month period on weekend dates. Recruitment for the third cohort to begin in September 2025 is now open.

The Championing National Parks Campaign is made possible through the National Lottery Heritage Fund with the support of the Yorkshire Dales Millennium Trust.



The Community Champions visit Malham Cove as part of their training programme this Spring

For more information on the Championing National Parks for Everyone project, contact Jamila Gaskin on jamila.gaskin@yorkshiredales.org.uk or visit **www.yorkshiredales.org.uk/championing-national-parks**

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Harnessing history and horsepower

Earlier this year, Trees & Woodland Officer Meghann Mezzanotte had the pleasure of watching the ancient art of horse logging (or 'snigging') in action in an Authority-owned woodland - an environmentally-friendly and low impact technique of extracting timber.

Find out how Tom Dutson and his Dales pony, Duchess (pictured), got on in Meghann's blog at **www.yorkshiredales.org.uk/harnessing-history-and-horsepower-at-cleatop-wood**

Our responsibilities regarding rights of way maintenance

If all the public paths in the Yorkshire Dales National Park were joined end-to-end they would provide a walk 2,637 kilometres long. Along its length, there would be approximately 4,630 stiles and 5,960 gates to pass over or through.

The Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority manages this important network on behalf of North Yorkshire Council, Westmorland and Furness Council, Lancashire County Council, and landowners across the Park.

Legislation states that it is the landowner that has the duty to maintain stiles and gates across rights of way. Many local authorities throughout England and Wales only provide a 25% contribution to these works. However, the National Park Authority has provided this service to landowners and farmers at no cost for over 40 years.

We recognise that a well-maintained rights of way network that can be used with confidence is beneficial to visitors, land managers and residents alike. Businesses, inside and outside the National Park benefit because good access to the area's special qualities underpins the visitor economy.

The importance placed on rights of way maintenance and access is often cited as one of the advantages of being in a National Park. With the lengthening of the holiday season and increasing emphasis placed on individual health and well-being, the value of access to the countryside continues to grow.

The recent National Park Management Plan consultation (January 2024) placed 'keeping the rights of way network in good condition, and improve options for cycling and other sustainable outdoor recreation activity' in the top six priorities selected by the public.





Barrier reduction: a new wooden gate (left) replaces an old stile (above) to improve access at Maulds Meaburn

Moreover, in the latest Residents Survey (November 2023), 88% of residents put 'Maintaining rights of way' as the most important function that should be undertaken by the Authority, but this comes at a price.

During the period of the Yorkshire Dales National Park Management Plan 2019-24 the Ranger Service has repaired or replaced 1,374 stiles and 1,529 gates on behalf of landowners and farmers. In addition, work is undertaken on behalf of the Councils to maintain all the signposts, river crossings (bridges and stepping stones) and surfaces across the network. On average, this costs the Authority over £1million per annum.

Rights of way maintenance continues to make an important contribution to the delivery of our objectives, and, specifically, our purpose 'to promote opportunities for the understanding and enjoyment of the special qualities of the Park' by the public. Therefore, it is our aim to ensure that the National Park has one of the best maintained rights of way networks in the country. But remembering that this work is undertaken on behalf of the Councils and landowners who retain their own statutory responsibilities.



An affordable housing scheme at Austwick

Draft Local Plan submitted to Planning Inspector

The National Park Authority has recently completed its formal six-week consultation on the Publication Draft Local Plan (2025-40).

The Publication Draft is essentially what the Authority considers to be its final version of the Local Plan. It includes a full set of planning policies for the National Park designed to shape development up to 2040.

The consultation generated approximately 250 individual comments from 63 stakeholders, including local residents, landowners, public bodies, interest groups and businesses. These were summarised and reported to the Authority in June, and the draft Local Plan, the representations and the evidence supporting the Plan will now be submitted to the Planning Inspectorate this summer.

The Plan will then be subject to an independent examination, conducted by a Planning Inspector, to assess whether it is fit for purpose and capable of being adopted and used for decision making. The examination will involve hearing sessions (round table discussions led by a Planning Inspector) involving National Park Authority officers, and objectors. These will likely take place in the Autumn.

Information and updates regarding the progress of the Local Plan can be found on the Authority's website at **www.yorkshiredales.org.uk/local-plan-2025-40**









FARMING IN PROTECTED LANDSCAPES: IN NUMBERS

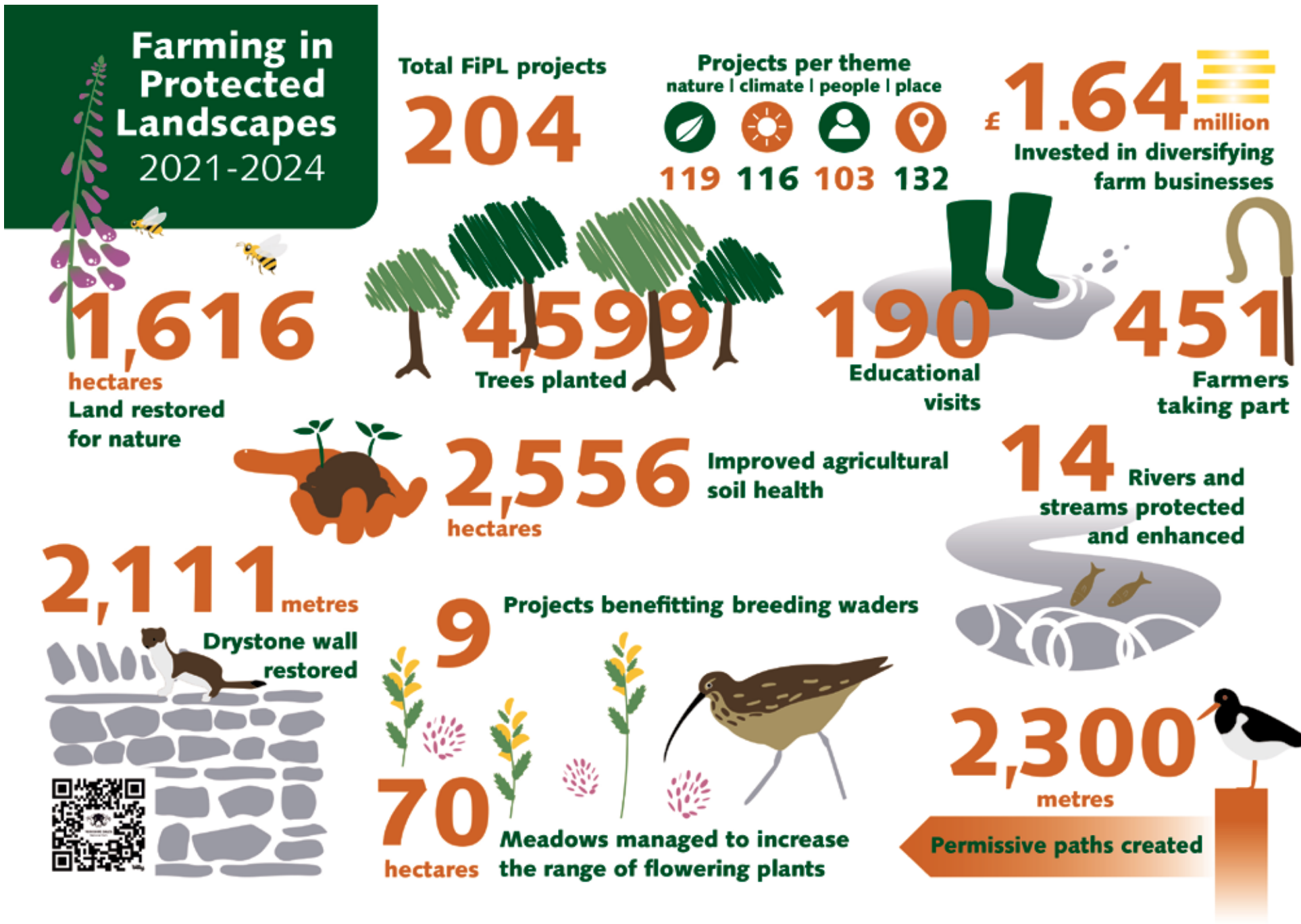
Since it began in July 2021, the Defra-funded Farming in Protected Landscapes (FiPL) programme in the Yorkshire Dales National Park has issued grants totalling £5.2 million to 204 nature-friendly farming projects.

The projects range from farm diversification enterprises - such as bee keeping and camping pods - to creating a parish network of hedgerows and trees.

In the last four years there have been 33 projects where farmers are increasing their understanding of carbon, soil health and climate change. Nearly 18km of new hedgerow has been created, as well as four new permissive paths (adding just over 2km to the footpath network). 190 school farm visits have been undertaken to help children understand food production and the environment, and 64 projects have focused on improving the profitability of the farm - something that is critical to the long-term viability of nature-friendly farming in the Dales.

With a further year's funding announced by the government to March 2026, the Authority is keen to increase the range and type of projects that are funded by FiPL - particularly where there is a small value project or where a project will benefit the public's enjoyment and understanding of the countryside and how it is managed.

If you are a farmer or land manager, please get in touch to find out how we can help you develop your project idea. For more information, including case studies, visit **www.yorkshiredales.org.uk/farming-in-protected-landscapes**





Kevin and Lizzie Batty with sheep and lambs, and their FiPL-supported shepherds huts in the background

Kevin and Lizzie Batty, from Dryevers Farm near Maulds Meaburn in the Westmorland Dales, are among the latest farmers to receive a Farming in Protected Landscapes grant.

They have diversified their traditional sheep and cattle enterprise by adding visitor accommodation, in the shape of three shepherd's huts, in part to meet a need generated by nearby wedding venues. Their grant also helped fund an expansion of a nature reserve on the farm, and the construction of three 'scrapes', or small ponds, to provide better habitat for birds such as curlew and snipe.

Lizzie said: "We wouldn't have done this project without the Farming in Protected Landscapes grant. We have invested a lot of our own money, but the grant made it doable. What we learned during the application process was the importance of being organised, getting things sorted with suppliers, and with planning consents."

"The farm was very reliant on the Basic Payment Scheme and a Countryside Stewardship mid-tier agri-environment agreement," continued Kevin, "but the doors have been shut on them, as well as the new Sustainable Farming Incentive, which is why this project is so important. We need a way to broaden our income streams. And it's good to showcase this area to the general public. We're ten minutes from Appleby, we're in the Yorkshire Dales National Park, close to the Lake District, and next to a wedding venue. There are lovely walks round here and great cycle tracks."

First 'active travel' plan for the National Park approved



A family cycling in Clapham

A new 'active travel' plan will develop better opportunities for safe and accessible routes across the National Park, and improve key connections into and across it for work and school - without needing a car.

'Active travel' refers to journeys that involve some form of physical activity. In the National Park this includes walking, 'wheeling' (wheelchair or active mobility aid), cycling and horse riding.

The new Active Travel Plan - approved by Authority Members in June - will be used by the organisation and its partners to prioritise which schemes the National Park Authority will co-develop with local authorities, complementing work being undertaken by Lancashire, North Yorkshire and Westmorland & Furness Councils, and support funding bids to implement the schemes over a 10 year period.

Over 500 responses were received to the National Park Authority's two public consultations on a new active travel network in October 2024 and May 2025. The survey sought to find out where people want to go and how they want to get there, identifying routes which provide opportunities for local communities and visitors to improve their physical and mental health and wellbeing.

The Plan includes suggestions for 21 long distance multiuser routes linking transport points to key destinations and service centres in the National Park, 7 local intervention schemes, such as better links for school children to three Dales schools, and walking improvements in three significant settlements in the National Park: Grassington/Threshfield, Hawes and Sedbergh.

Member Champion for Recreation Management at the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority, Lizzie Bushby, said: "We would like to see walking, 'wheeling' and cycling become easier options for making everyday journeys. The aim is to improve routes and connections so that they are suitable and attractive - for example, for a family, or for self-propelled as well as all-terrain electric wheelchair users."

The work of producing an Active Travel Plan was made possible by a £100,000 grant from Active Travel England. All National Park Authorities in England have received the same amount of funding.

It is hoped that Active Travel England will in future be able to provide further funding and resources to support both strategic, traffic-free, multi-user routes as well as small, so-called 'missing links' to provide communities and visitors with easier access to active travel infrastructure.

For more information on the Active Travel Plan, and to follow progress as it develops, visit **www.yorkshiredales.org.uk/active-travel**

Ambition for 'access for all' at Aysgarth Falls takes a step closer

The 'honeypot' site of Aysgarth Falls now includes a wheelchair-accessible scenic 4km circular route, thanks to funding from Defra's Farming in Protected Landscapes Programme.

Starting at Aysgarth Falls National Park Visitor Centre, the surfaced and signposted route is suitable for most visitors, including families with pushchairs, the elderly, and those with limited mobility.

The route goes through ancient Freeholders' Wood, alongside the River Ure, and across fields with wonderful views to Bolton Castle and the landscape of Wensleydale.

Part of the route is fenced off, which has benefits to users, landowners and wildlife. The fence keeps stock and visitors apart, so there is less chance of the animals being attacked by dogs - incidents which have sadly increased in recent years. The path passes through a field known to be a good site for lapwing and curlew and, because of the fence, these groundnesting birds have more chance of being left undisturbed.

The Authority has been working with local partners for a number of years to make Aysgarth Falls into a flagship accessible site. There are accessible toilets and parking bays, an accessible visitor centre and café, and an access guide produced for the site with maps and information.

There are now two free-to-hire Trampers (all-terrain wheelchairs), meaning that even more people will be able to take advantage of the new route, as well as enabling those with mobility difficulties to get to the water's edge at the upper falls and viewing platform in the woods above the middle falls.



Volunteer coordinator Simon Hickling and presenter and disability campaigner Ade Adepitan MBE demonstrate the Tramper at Aysgarth Falls for BBC Morning Live

The Trampers can be booked in advance via Access the Dales - a charity with a mission to 'make the inaccessible accessible' - or visitors can just turn up and borrow at the centre, if available.

Cathy Bergs, Aysgarth Falls Visitor Centre Manager, said: 'The Trampers are becoming popular with our visitors and local residents alike as they become increasingly aware of how beneficial they are to help family and friends get out and enjoy more of the countryside.

"When you book, you will have them for the whole day - so there is no rush; plenty of time to absorb Aysgarth Falls' lovely sights and sounds".

Improving the welcome for people with disabilities and access on appropriate public rights of way is one of the objectives agreed by the Authority and a wide range of local partner organisations in the National Park Management Plan.

England's first National Trail turns 60

2025 marks the 60th anniversary of the original - and perhaps most iconic - National Trail, the Pennine Way. This milestone is being celebrated with events showcasing just how treasured the popular walking route still is.

In the 1930s, more and more people were looking for an escape from towns and cities and there was growing conflict between hikers and landowners. In 1932 around 400 frustrated walkers exercised what they saw as their right to walk unhindered on open moorland and staged a mass trespass on Kinder Scout in the Peak District.

Inspired by the long-distance trails of North America, journalist and keen walker Tom Stephenson wrote an article in 1935 calling for a 'long green trail' which would allow people to share in and explore the most remote parts of the country. His proposed route was a 268-mile trail from Edale to Kirk Yetholm, traversing England's highest uplands.

After decades of lobbying, the trail was officially opened in 1965, with a ceremony held at one the route's most spectacular features, Malham Moor - just one example of the wild and beautiful landscapes people could now explore.

The Pennine Way's diamond jubilee is being marked by a special rolling exhibition, curated by the Pennine National Trails Partnership.

In 'A Trail of Inspiration', artists, poets, authors and songwriters, each having walked all or part of the route, explore what the trail means to them and reflect on the lasting impact it has had on so many. The exhibition features everything from paintings and poetry to talking backpacks and rock music, going to show that each journey on the Pennine Way is unique.

The exhibition opened at the Dales Countryside Museum in Hawes in April, and is now at Bowlees Visitor Centre until 31 August, before moving to its final stop at The Sill National Landscape Discovery Centre in Northumberland from 12 September.



Writer Anita Sethi is one of the artists taking part in the 'A Trail of Inspiration' touring exhibition marking the Pennine Way at 60

To find out more about the Pennine Way, visit **www.nationaltrail.co.uk/pennine-way-at-60**

Young voices making a difference in the Dales

Two young recruits are bringing a fresh perspective to the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority's Finance & Resources Committee, helping to guide decisions on budgets, access and the environment.

Katie Norgate - a civil servant from Northallerton - and Zac Anderson - an HM Prison & Probation Service officer, living in London - were co-opted to the committee earlier this year and are already playing active roles in discussions that influence how the Authority allocates resources.

Katie, 25, and Zac, 21, were appointed as part of a wider initiative to increase the voice of younger people on the Authority's board, and will serve for two years on the Finance & Resources Committee.

"It's an opportunity to connect my studies to the real world" said Zac, a land economy graduate. "I've always loved the outdoors - being in the Scouts, I'm really into hiking and camping - so taking on this role just made sense."

Katie, who works in food inspection for Defra, seized the opportunity. She said: "A role like this is unique and I thought it would be interesting to see how a National Park works behind the scenes."

The Finance & Resources Committee plays a vital, often invisible role in the Authority. "It's more upstream, if that makes sense?" said Zac. "We look at what money is coming in and then decide where best to allocate it."

While Katie and Zac can't vote on committee matters, they can contribute to discussions and are encouraged to share their opinions and ideas - something they have both embraced.

"From day one we've had a voice", Zac said. "I like being able to raise a point others may not have thought of."

One issue both members care about is how the National Park engages with young people. "We need to have those young people in the room influencing the decisions being made for them", Zac said.

Katie said: "There are certain issues that we have better understanding of both being young and from outside the National Park. For example, we recently discussed affordable housing in the Dales and, as I've just been through the buying process myself, I know what's realistic for someone my age."

Their local knowledge spans different corners of the National Park, Katie preferring the remoteness of the northern Dales and Zac sharing his fondness for the western parts.

Their committee involvement has already included meetings, a ranger-led visit, and an exploration of the new accessible route at Aysgarth Falls.

"It was incredible," said Katie. "The length of the route and the variety of landscapes was fantastic. You pass animals, bluebells, and get amazing views of Bolton Castle, and it's all accessible. It's the kind of work that really makes a difference."

As the Authority looks to the future, both are clear about what they want this to look like. Katie said: "We bring a different perspective and that's essential for planning for the future. We're going to be facing things that are so different from older generations."

They share the same direction for their time on the committee. "It's about getting everyone on the same mission, young people included." Zac said.

As their involvement continues, both say they are looking forward to making a lasting, positive impact on the landscapes they care deeply about.



The Authority's Finance & Resources Committee co-opted youth members, Zac Anderson and Katie Norgate, in Malham

Upland woodland project reaches completion

Valuable tree cover in the northern uplands has been increased, thanks to the 'Heart of the Pennines Forest' partnership project.

Funded by Defra, this 'Trees Call to Action Fund' project has delivered a wide range of nature recovery, engagement and employment activity over the last three years, supporting the key themes of the England Trees Action Plan.

Trees in the uplands help to reduce water run-off and flooding in communities downstream, clean our water and air, store carbon and provide shade and shelter for livestock on farms. They provide a critical food resource and habitat for wildlife, including rare upland birds such as black grouse.

In March 2022, the North Pennines National Landscape was awarded £499,100 for the Heart of the Pennines Forest project, with match funding from the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority, Woodland Trust and Yorkshire Dales Millennium Trust.

The project area was designed to bridge the gap between the existing Great Northumberland National Forest to the north and the Northern Forest initiative in the Dales.

Over the past three years, the partners have worked with over 120 land managers to increase and manage tree cover. This has included advice to identify the best locations, design and species to fit with the landscape and existing priority habitats and species, support with surveying, planning and accessing funding, and advice on managing existing woodland for nature recovery.

Within the Yorkshire Dales, the team advised on potential woodland sites covering 245 hectares, and helped to identify funding to start getting trees in the ground. The programme secured a total investment of £737,942 for trees, people and the green economy.

Project partners Yorkshire Dales Millennium Trust established three community tree nurseries to engage local communities and supply native upland species, and employed four woodland trainees who gained industry experience.

The Authority's Woodland Project Officer Luke Walpole said: "The Defra funding has enabled the Authority to provide extra advice and support to farmers and land managers in the Cumbrian area of the National Park.

"A good example is at Uldale House, in the gritstone upland, where a seven-hectare upland pasture was transformed into riparian woodland. Funding for the planting was through the Woodland Trust's Grow Back Greener fund.

"Working closely with Natural England and the Forestry Commission, the final design focused on riparian woodland that avoided peat and wading bird zones, while strengthening local ecology."

Sarah Tooze, Nature Recovery Manager at the North Pennines National Landscape, said: "The Heart of the Pennines Forest project focussed on the kinds of tree cover - small scale woodlands and low-density wood pasture with scrub and scattered canopy trees - which work alongside nature-friendly farming systems and will improve the landscape for biodiversity and other public goods. Offering advice and support for the management of existing woodland has been important to maximise their benefit for wildlife."

The Trees Call to Action Fund is part of Defra's £640 million Nature for Climate Fund Programme, which supports projects in England which protect trees and woodlands, boost forestry skills and jobs, develop woodland creation partnerships, and engage communities with nature.

The Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority offers advice and support to land managers who wish to increase tree cover, manage woodland and access funding. Please contact the team at **woodlandcreation@yorkshiredales.org.uk**



New upland sapling planting in Cumbria with protective tree guards

Celebrating the flavours of the Dales - and all things cheese



Cheese tasting at an event in Wensleydale: businesses are invited to get involved in the 2025 Yorkshire Dales Cheese Festival

Now in its eighth year, the Yorkshire Dales Cheese Festival: Celebrating Local Produce has grown into a much-loved celebration of the region's rich farming heritage, thriving artisan food scene, and - of course - its famously delicious and locally-produced cheese.

What began as a small event focused on championing the Dales' renowned dairy produce has now evolved into a region-wide festival. Businesses in and around the Yorkshire Dales National Park are welcome to take part by holding their own event to feature in the Festival line-up.

From farm shops and farmers' markets to historic pubs and pop-up experiences, the Festival is a showcase for the special qualities of the Yorkshire Dales National Park, particularly its unique cheeses.

Taking place this year from 10 to 19 October, the Festival will be made up of creative, cheese-themed events that reflect the flavour, character, and community spirit of the Dales. Whether it's beer and cheese pairings at country inns, artisan pizza nights, cheesemaking demonstrations, or retailers curating local produce hampers, there's something to tempt every taste all over the National Park.

An online interactive map will help showcase what's on offer and where. It will highlight events by location and spotlight key attractions such as cheese producers, local markets, and independent food retailers - making it easier than ever for residents and visitors to plan their foody adventure.

As the Festival continues to grow year-on-year, it remains rooted in its mission: to celebrate the land, the people, and the produce that make the Yorkshire Dales National Park so special.

To find out how to get involved as a local business or to view the Festival's interactive map, visit **www.yorkshiredales.org.uk/cheese-festival** or contact **tourism@yorkshiredales.org.uk**

Major work on Coast to Coast trail continues

The first waymarking signs have appeared on the Coast to Coast route, as major path engineering works continue to ensure the much-loved trail is fully open to the public and meets National Trail quality standards.

Designated a National Trail by the government in 2022, the Coast to Coast was originally described by Alfred Wainwright in 1973.

Much of that route did not have any legal status, so the Authority has been working to ensure it correlates to public rights of way. Antiquated rights of way have been diverted onto the used walked line and new definitive rights of way have been created.

Signage can now be spotted springing up along the route. Steve Hastie, Area Manager (Western Dales), said: "It's been lovely after all the team's hard work to go out on site and engage with users."

"The majority of the fingerposts within the western Dales are installed and, with the completion of some of the legal works, additional waymarker posts will be added this summer. It's just great to see people having such a positive experience of the route."

Path improvements at White Mossy Hill - an area of important peatland habitat in Birkdale - have taken a short break due to groundnesting bird season, but the ranger team will be back out laying stone flags from early August. With work expected to be completed by the end of November, this will create a continuous sustainable surface which will not only improve the experience of users, but also protect this fragile landscape from further surface erosion.

In March, resurfacing improvements were made to a short section of the Coast to Coast route near Reeth, which is used by both visitors and residents.

Michael Briggs, Area Ranger (Swaledale & Arkengarthdale) said: "This work shows how the investment in the Coast to Coast path is supporting the wider public rights of way network within the Dales.

"Although the section is relatively short, the newly laid flags and step improvements have created a sustainable surface that facilitates access in all weather conditions. This route is part of the designated National Trail, but also forms an integral route for shorter walks around Reeth that visitors and residents enjoy."



A resurfaced path on the Coast to Coast route near Reeth that is used regularly by both visitors and residents

Angela Hobson, Project Manager for the Coast to Coast Path, said: "There has been so much work away from the public view to enable these works to happen. Not just Authority staff, but by landowners and stakeholders.

"Without this support the team would not have been able to achieve what we have in the last 18 months, so I would really like to pause and say thank you."

Further signage and infrastructure improvements will continue for the rest of this year, including the installation of four new bridges on the route across Ney Gill and surface improvement works in the Westmorland Dales.

A further eight path orders and one creation agreement are expected to be completed within the next couple of months, and this will see further signage installed on these sections.

The infrastructure project is funded by Natural England. This phase will complete in March 2026, with the Coast to Coast National Trail formally launched later that year.

Find out more about work on the Coast to Coast National Trail at **www.yorkshiredales.org.uk/coast-to-coast**

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Grant fund open to applications

People or local organisations looking to improve the environment in the National Park, in ways that will also benefit local communities or the local economy, are being invited to apply to the Sustainable Development Fund, which this year has a budget of £100,000.

The Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority is looking to award up to 10 grants before the end of March 2026.

An example of a recent project supported by the fund is 'WingIt' in Swaledale, which has seen the creation of nest sites for swifts, swallows and house martins.

A grant from the Fund has enabled WingIt to publish an information leaflet on protecting nest sites during building work, as well as to install QR codes at seven locations - from Keld to Fremington - so people can find out more about the birds, which characterise Dales villages and towns at this time of year. WingIt is also broadcasting live video from swallow nests in Reeth and Low Row.

Other recent projects to be supported by the Fund include Settle Primary School's sensory playground, accessibility improvements at Ingleborough Cave in Clapham, and Embsay & Bolton Abbey Steam Railway's plan to restore a passenger footbridge at Bolton Abbey Railway Station.

Member Champion for Sustainable Development at the National Park Authority, Richard Foster, said: "The Sustainable Development Fund supports people to conserve natural beauty, wildlife and cultural heritage, and to increase access to the special qualities of the National Park.

"Individuals, businesses, community groups and voluntary sector bodies can all apply, and I would encourage people to please get in touch if they have a project idea."



Waiting to be fed: a recent scene from WingIt's live swallow nest camera in Reeth, a project supported by the Authority's Sustainable Development Fund

Find out more, including how to apply, at **www.yorkshiredales.org.uk/sustainable-development-fund** or by emailing **sdf@yorkshiredales.org.uk**



Pupils from Hillcrest Academy in Leeds get hands-on with the animals at Gam Farm, Grassington, as part of the Generation Green 2 programme

Landmark project helps young people discover the 'power of the outdoors'

Young people from some of the most under-served and socially disadvantaged areas of the UK have been building life-long connections to nature, thanks to a pioneering 12-month project.

Research shows that 18% of children living in the most deprived areas never spend time in any kind of natural space.

The £4.5m Defra-funded Generation Green 2 programme aimed to tackle major inequalities in access to nature by cultivating a wider interest in green spaces among the next generation, fostering lifelong wellbeing benefits among participants, and opening protected places to even more young people.

The Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority received £48,250 to help 7 to 18-year-olds living in some of the most under-served communities, and from schools with a pupil premium of 30% or more, visit the National Park.

The Authority's Learning and Engagement team worked with 29 different schools and organisations, delivering 40 visits for 490 individuals, through residential stays, evenings under the stars, farm visits and day visits, exploring the special qualities of the area.

The majority of groups (80%) came from the Leeds and Bradford areas, with the rest from Blackburn, Colne, Rochdale and Darlington.

Sixty Year 4 pupils from Hillcrest Academy in Leeds visited Grassington last October, where they went to Gam Farm and got up close and personal with pigs, goats and donkeys, as well as enjoying a river walk. For eight-year-old Emma, the waterfall was her best bit - "it was like calm music". But for most of the students, the "cute" and "friendly" animals won the day.

The 10th Yorkshire Dales Dark Skies Festival in February was a wonderful opportunity to host evenings under the stars for eight community groups of 11 to 18-year-olds from Leeds, Wakefield, Bradford and Keighley. Activities included the 'Moon Palace' mobile observatory and a walk at Ribblehead Viaduct.

The Authority's Access & Engagement Project Officer, Ruth McBain, said: "Light pollution means people living in densely urban areas will never see a truly dark night sky. Even on a cloudy day, being away from city lights and possibly seeing the stars is a new life experience for most."

Other participants enjoyed residential trips to sites like Grinton in Swaledale where they were able to socialise, relax and unwind, and appreciate time spent in nature.

Derek Twine, Chair of the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority, said: "In the first phase of Generation Green we were able to support visits for 1,126 young people and establish the 'Up Skill, Down Dale' youth volunteering scheme which, now in its fifth year, has since helped nine young people secure jobs in the green sector.

"Generation Green 2 has given even more young people - who wouldn't otherwise visit the National Park - the opportunity to feel the joy and wellbeing benefits of spending time in this special place. All these experiences are building skills and confidence in a new generation to encourage them to return to and care for the National Park in the future".

A total of 24 partner organisations from the third and public sector came together through the Access Unlimited coalition to deliver Generation Green 2, including nine National Park Authorities.

By the end of the project, the programme had enabled 26,663 young people across the UK to experience 'the power of the outdoors'.

According to a recently published report by the University of Derby, which marks the programme's impact, eight in ten participants said they would not have had the chance to experience the outdoors without the support of Generation Green 2. And for over a third, it marked their first ever visit to the countryside.

Read more about the experiences of, and testimonies from, young people who took part in the Generation Green 2 programme at **www.yorkshiredales.org.uk/generation-green-2**

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